

generated through postings on the Internet discussion groups 'Oriental Birding' and 'NEO-ORN' (Bulletin Board for Ornithologists working with Neotropical Birds), and Des Allen, Dave Buckingham, Andrew Easton and Willem-Pier Vellinga for their particularly interesting responses. ♀

References

1. Goodwin, D. 1967. *Pigeons and Doves of the World*. London, UK: British Museum (Natural History).
2. del Hoyo, J., Elliott, A. and Sargatal, J. 1997. *Handbook of the Birds of the World*. Vol 4. Barcelona: Lynx Edicions.

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Clamorous Reed Warblers *Acrocephalus stentoreus* nesting in maize

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La nidification de la Rousserolle stentor *Acrocephalus stentoreus* dans des champs de culture en Afrique est documentée pour la première fois. Les observations antérieures de l'espèce chantant dans des cultures en Egypte suggèrent qu'elle avait peut-être déjà niché dans ce milieu.

On 19–20 May 2000, I found five nests of Clamorous Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus stentoreus*, and c20 singing birds, in a mature maize crop, on Crocodile Island, in the River Nile, near Luxor, Egypt. The maize was just over 2 m high and occupied an area of c200 x 100 m. Each of the five nests contained 3–4 eggs. Two other individuals were observed carrying nesting material. A few days later the crop was cut and all the nests destroyed.

In previous years, in the same place, there were extensive stands of tall *Phragmites* in the channel between Crocodile Island and the east bank of the

Nile, in which Clamorous Reed Warbler was a common breeder. Local people informed me that the reeds had been cleared the previous winter; most remaining cover was, at the time of my visit, generally too low and flimsy to support nests of this species, which require 2–4 strong upright stems around which a nest can be woven. The mature maize was perfectly suitable for this purpose and was clearly being used as a substitute.

Nesting in crops does not appear to have been recorded in Africa¹. BWP² refers to birds singing, and evidently breeding, in maize in Tadzhikistan and to breeders feeding in crops near water in Western Australia. Goodman & Meininger³ refer to regular singing in sugar-cane fields and other crops, in Egypt, but not to nesting, although I suspect, given hindsight, that these records indicate breeding. ♀



Figure 1. Nest and eggs of Clamorous Reed Warbler *Acrocephalus stentoreus* in maize crop, in Egypt (Peter Castell)

References

1. Cramp, S. (ed) 1992. *The Birds of the Western Palearctic*. Vol 6. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
2. Goodman, S.M. and Meininger, P.L. (eds) 1989. *The Birds of Egypt*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
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